

Promoting Business Response to the 2007 Economic Census

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Abstract

The Economic Census is the major source of facts about the structure and functioning of the Nation's economy. Every 5 years, the Economic Census also provides the industry and geographic detail businesses and communities need to assess their performance, promote economic development, and identify business opportunities.

Census forms will be mailed to five million businesses in October-December 2007. The forms are due February 12, 2008, and results will be released starting in early 2009. This ambitious schedule depends on timely and accurate responses from all businesses: the millions of small, single-location businesses, and the thousands of very large businesses that account for a substantial share of national output.

The 2002 Economic Census showed decline in response rates relative to the 1997 Economic Census, which in turn was a decline from the peak response in the 1992 Economic Census. The Census Bureau is conducting a comprehensive communication program to encourage business response to the 2007 Economic Census. The effort involves systematic improvements in operations, procedures, and communications, managed relationships with large businesses, and promotional activities directed at all respondents, primarily through intermediary organizations and news media.

This paper describes communication and response promotion plans. Issues presented for discussion include recommendations for

- additional communication strategies;
- raising interest among businesses, intermediaries, and the media;
- promoting electronic reporting; and
- research opportunities we should consider while the census is under way.

Questions:

1. What else we can do, directly or through intermediaries, to encourage timely business response to the Economic Census, particularly by large businesses?
2. What steps should we take to raise trade association, business press, and other intermediary interest in promoting Economic Census response?
3. What else should we do to promote use of the Business Help Site and the electronic reporting tool by business respondents?
4. What research should we conduct during the coming months or during the census to identify persuasive themes or evaluate new strategies to encourage businesses to respond to the Economic Census?

Promoting Business Response to the 2007 Economic Census

1. Introduction

Every 5 years, the Economic Census profiles the United States economy from the national to the local level. These facts and figures are important. Census data contribute to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), to other measures of output, pricing, and productivity, and to effective public policy. Census data also are essential to business planning and marketing decisions.

The Economic Census helps identify and measure economic trends. The census will introduce new questions about franchising, outsourcing, and health and pension benefit expenses to better measure changing business practices. The census will introduce updates to the North American Industry Classification System, and a new way to classify many service products.

In October-December 2007, the Census Bureau will mail Economic Census forms to more than 5 million businesses nationwide. The forms are due roughly 60 days later, on February 12, 2008. Many businesses will need more time to gather their records and complete the forms, and will obtain reporting extensions. The Census Bureau will spend much of calendar year 2008 following up with businesses that have not responded and helping businesses to respond.

Response to the Economic Census is required by law (Title 13, U.S. Code), and both research and anecdotal evidence demonstrate that the reporting requirement motivates business response. Most businesses recognize the value of census information, and we have not found it necessary (or politically expedient) to prosecute businesses that do not respond. At the same time, nonresponse and late response affect both the cost of the census and the accuracy of census results. Our challenge is to maintain and improve upon past reporting levels.

Some factors that influence census response, such as the business, regulatory, and political climate will be out of our control. The 1992 Economic Census, for example, was conducted amid a hotly contested Presidential election in which candidate debates shed light on the importance of statistical information. The 2002 Economic Census was conducted shortly after the dramatic events of September 11, 2001, which resulted in an increase in patriotic sentiment that was, unfortunately, short-lived.

Response rates to the Economic Census peaked in the 1992 Economic Census, at 92 percent, the first year "Your Response is Required by Law" was printed on the envelope. Response declined in the 1997 and 2002 censuses. The 2002 Economic Census reached a rate of 84 percent only after collection activities were extended well past the original deadline.

This paper reviews initiatives to improve the rate of business response to the Economic Census through improvements in our processes, enhanced direct communication with

businesses, and publicity and awareness through news media and intermediary organizations.

2. Response Promotion: Processing Improvements and Better Communication

The Economic Census covers all private, non-farm businesses. Because industry and geographic information are very important to government and business decision makers, we gather information for each individual location. We send forms for each location of multi-location firms, and to all but the smallest single location firms with paid employees. To minimize reporting burden on the millions of businesses without paid employees, we rely on administrative records of other Federal agencies in lieu of a form.

We conduct the Economic Census primarily by mail. We are developing more than 500 separate versions of the census report form, including short versions consisting primarily of check boxes for very small businesses. We send forms to a sample of very small firms with employees to obtain information, such as product lines, that is not available from administrative records. As in 2002, we will offer an electronic reporting option to all businesses in addition to traditional paper forms; the software being used for 2007 is significantly improved over its 2002 counterpart in a number of ways.

In some respects, promoting response to the Economic Census is a relatively straightforward task. We have a complete list of the businesses receiving forms, and we can employ a variety of direct mail and marketing techniques to educate and persuade them. We implemented a number of approaches over the years that have helped sustain business participation in the Economic Census. They include:

- Messages on mailout envelopes: "Your Response is Required by Law"
- Improved cover letters with the form mailing packages
- Standardized formatting and content of common questionnaire elements
- Replacement forms mailed to delinquent single-unit companies, 3 times in early 2008
- Reminder letters to delinquent multi-unit businesses, with replacement forms mailed once to small multi-units
- Toll-free telephone support staffed 10 hours daily; telephone number listed on forms, letters, and instructions
- "Accountants' program" for independent accountants who might be asked to prepare forms for their clients
- Publicity in print media supplemented with minimal targeted radio and TV material
- Advance information provided to the large businesses
- Census Account Managers (AM) provided for the largest companies

2.1 Processing Improvements

Electronic Reporting – The electronic reporting tool (“Surveyor”) used for the 2002 Economic Census was successful in many respects, and more than one third of all multiunit establishment report forms were submitted electronically. However, many respondents found the tool to be difficult to use because it depended on their ability to master complex software, and precise record-matching and column-matching procedures. Many companies submitted their electronic responses successfully only after receiving extensive assistance from Census Bureau staff.

The Census Bureau has updated Surveyor for the 2007 Economic Census, in an extensive effort that included research and requirements-gathering visits to dozens of companies in many industries nationwide. Businesses will be able to download a Windows® based version of nearly every form. The improved tool incorporates a spreadsheet-like interface to facilitate interaction with the respondents’ own spreadsheets. The respondent can either enter the data directly into the electronic form or copy and paste data into a workbook view, and upload completed forms using the Internet. Edits built into the electronic form ensure accuracy and limit follow-up calls from Census Bureau staff.

The Census Bureau did not have the resources to develop a web-based form for the 2007 Economic Census. At the same time, some focus group participants told us they would prefer to leave a form and come back much later, which is consistent with the Census Bureau’s downloadable software.

Automated Business Help Site – For many years, the Census Bureau has published a toll-free telephone number on census forms that businesses could call to get help. The line was available 12 hours each weekday during the 2002 Economic Census. More than 350,000 businesses used it to request new forms or extensions of the filing deadline, to get explanations of the purpose of the census, and get answers to their questions about what to include or how to respond.

We introduced a web-based 24/7 option for 2002, the Business Help Site (BHS). It provides links to census forms and instructions, answers to frequently-asked questions, and links to census results. It also provides a secure interface that respondents can use to get extensions and replacement forms, verify that forms were received, and to send an e-mail to Census Bureau staff. The web address - www.census.gov/econhelp - is listed on every census form, on cover letters, and on a link from the Economic Census web site. This has become the first place many business people go when they have a question or need help with their forms. The site received 3.5 million “hits” in the 2002 census, and over 10 million “hits” are expected in 2007. For 2007 we will introduce a new interface or “portal” to facilitate transfers of data files and other confidential information in a secure environment.

Operators on the Census Bureau's toll-free line and other Bureau staff will use an expanded version of the BHS to guide their own answers to respondents. This will help assure that the material on the site is complete, accurate, responsive, and consistent.

2.2 Communications

Processing improvements and direct communications in the questionnaire package are a start. We will supplement them with managed relationships with very large companies, and messages and information through news media and intermediaries.

2.2.1 Personal Contact with Large Companies

Very large companies have enormous importance to the Economic Census: taken together, the top 1,000 account for at least a third of GDP. Yet each is an individual entity with its own characteristics, organization, record keeping, corporate identity, and reporting problems or obstacles. Some large firms take their role as corporate citizens very seriously and work hard to meet census requirements, while others are less willing to comply.

Since the 1992 Economic Census we have conducted an Account Manager (AM) program to address large companies individually. For the 2007 Economic Census, 170 AMs will work with 1,300 very large companies. We will train AMs, provide them with detailed information about companies and their reporting burden, and assign them to work with these largest and most important companies. The first task of the AM will be to identify the best person at the company to receive the forms and coordinate Economic Census reporting. The AM will work with the company contact to:

- identify and help minimize obstacles to reporting
- facilitate more timely reporting; and
- advocate use of electronic reporting tools.

The AM program rides the coattails of the broader Customer Relationship Management (CRM) program, a directorate-wide effort to coordinate company contacts across economic programs. Through this program we are finding ways to make business reporting easier and more efficient, and sharing information about company organization and reporting changes across surveys. We may not get earlier reports from every large company, because fiscal years and other factors impose finite limits. Nevertheless, constructive dialogue will identify ways to ease business burden and obtain better and more timely data from many companies.

AMs will help companies prepare for the census, guide them through the reporting process, and clarify particular forms. The AM's role as an electronic reporting advocate is particularly important. This is a win-win proposition: respondents can import data from spreadsheets they use internally, reducing their burden; and electronic files arrive

in the format needed for processing, bypassing time-consuming data entry and processing steps.

To kick-off the AM effort, we will mail advance information about the Economic Census to these 1,300 largest companies in April 2007. This is part of a larger mailout that encompasses the 13,000 companies with 500 or more employees; however only the top 1,300 will have an assigned AM. The advance materials include information about the census, lists of items requested for each sector, and frequently asked questions. This is a heads-up to allow the company time to plan for census reporting. To reinforce our message about the importance of the Economic Census, a duplicate copy of the advance packet will be sent to the Chief Financial Officers (CFO) at the 1,300 large companies with AMs,

One of the most important components of the advance materials package is a Contact Exchange Card. It asks who at the company will coordinate Economic Census reporting. While many companies will complete and return a postage-free postcard with their updated contact information, we also will provide an online form that companies can use to update their information. For the 1,300 largest companies, the card provides the name and phone number for the census AM. To avoid confusion, we will not send a Contact Exchange Card to CFOs, but the AM name and telephone number are included in the cover letter the CFO receives. In response to security concerns, we will not provide a simple e-mail address for response; instead, we will provide instructions for accessing our secure portal.

We will follow the advance mailing with a series of scheduled AM contacts, including a heads-up call before the forms arrive, another call to verify that the company received the forms, and additional contacts needed until the forms are returned. We have made changes to the overall model, including:

- 1) **Increased management involvement.** While the AM program is managed within the Economic Planning and Coordination Division, most AMs work on census and survey programs in Manufacturing and Construction Division or Service Sector Statistics Division at headquarters, or at the National Processing Center in Jeffersonville, IN. The AM program always has had the support of top Census Bureau management, but middle managers concerned with day-to-day operations sometimes sent mixed signals. We are increasing the amount of information supplied to managers so they will be better equipped to reinforce our message about the importance of the AM program, including a special kickoff for managers and new MIS reports for all levels of management.
- 2) **Preparation for contacts.** We will define specific objectives and suggest a script for each type of call. We also will provide extensive

- 3) training including a motivational speaker, practice sessions, and role playing. We will use e-mail via secure portal in place of telephone calls for some contacts with companies.
- 4) **Training in how to handle refusals.** AMs will receive training in identifying response problems before they escalate. AMs also will receive strategies for dealing with problem respondents before they become problems.
- 5) **Electronic Reporting.** Success of 2007 Economic Census response promotion efforts may hinge on the success of the electronic reporting initiative. Every AM is expected to encourage companies to consider electronic reporting, and to provide assistance where possible. AMs will receive thorough training in the use of the software, and some AMs in each Division some will be "Certified Surveyor Experts."
- 6) **Cross-training.** While most AMs work with just one industry or sector, many large companies are involved in multiple sectors. While respondents may look to AMs for information about the entire census requirement, AMs may not feel prepared to discuss industries and programs outside their area of expertise. To address this we will provide quick reference materials and Intranet resources to tell AMs what each program is about, explain sector-to-sector differences in common terms, and identify subject matter experts for each program. We also will familiarize AMs with resources available to companies, such as electronic reporting and the Business Help Site.
- 7) **Better internal record-keeping and information-sharing.** We introduced the Remedy CRM tool for contact management in the 2002 Economic Census to organize company information, alert AMs to changes, and remind AMs to make contacts. We have redesigned the system, based on feedback and usability testing. The updated tool, now called AM Software, is simplified for all users and provides improved MIS for supervisors.
- 8) **Better information.** We will give AMs detailed profiles of each assigned company, including reporting history, a diary of AM contacts recorded during the 2002 Economic Census, and a list of the forms the company will receive. The background material in the company profiles will better prepare AMs as they make their calls.

We will provide access to a detailed Census Bureau survey "reporting calendar" for each company. The reporting calendar lists every survey that a company receives from the Census Bureau, when the forms are

due, who at the Census Bureau can answer questions about the survey, and to whom within the company the forms are directed. Reporting calendars will instill in AMs an understanding of the situation and burden faced by their companies' government reporting staffs. By seeing all the surveys a company receives and where in the company they are directed, an AM may be able to assist the respondent in areas outside the Economic Census. Most important, this increased awareness will help AMs to establish rapport with respondents, empathize with their circumstances, and suggest creative ways to accomplish the census reporting task.

- 9) **Better timing for the advance mailing.** Companies have told us they appreciate advance notice about the census, but want it within the 6-month horizon they use for resource planning. We are mailing the advance materials in April 2007, about 7 months ahead of the October mailout scheduled for the largest companies. In contrast to previous censuses, nearly all census forms will be designed and available to be previewed on the Internet when the advance information is mailed.

Table 1. Schedule of AM Calls and Economic Census Events

Timing	Purpose
April 07	Advance mailing
Apr-May 07	AM kickoffs and training
May-Jul 07	Data entry of returned contact exchange cards
Apr-Jul 07	AM Call #1: Introduction Acknowledge card receipt, Offer help, elec reporting, split mailing, other services Review 02 reporting and discuss 07 timing
Oct 07	Mailout to 1,200 large companies with AMs
Oct 07-Mar 08	Visits to 200 selected companies to assist with electronic reporting
Dec 07	Economic Census mailout for remaining companies
Jan 08	AM Call # 2: Verify receipt of forms, Discuss timing, Grant extensions if needed, Offer help
Feb 08	Census forms due
Mar-Jun 08	AM Call # 3: Verify receipt of forms, Offer assistance, Discuss timing, services Provide extensions if needed
Jul-Sep 08	Escalations
Oct 08	Closeout of collection operation
Feb 09	Dissemination begins; provide results to respondents

2.2.2 Strategy of Stridency

Every census, some companies report late. This may be unavoidable for some, for example if their fiscal year ends late in the calendar year or they are undergoing merger or reorganization activity. In the case of privately held companies, that do not file regularly with the SEC, they may be reluctant to share financial information with the Government and concern about the Census Bureau's ability to safeguard their data. Where possible, we will reach out to companies with a history of late- or non- response, to address problems and concerns and ensure they report as soon as records are available.

A few companies are doggedly uncooperative and necessitate sterner measures. Toward the end of the 1997 Economic Census, the Under Secretary of Commerce, and later the Chief Counsel for Economic Affairs, sent strongly worded letters to the Chief Executive Officers and General Counsels of 100 very large companies that had not reported. The letters emphasized the importance of the census and reminded businesses of their legal requirement to report. All of these companies responded within days of receiving the second letter (from the Chief Counsel), and most ultimately reported on the Economic Census.

For the 2002 Economic Census, as well as the 2003, 2004, and 2005 Report of Organization surveys, we placed more focus on noncompliant businesses:

- We contacted each company that received a stern letter in the 1997 census, encouraged timely response, offered assistance and recommended they consider reporting electronically. Nearly all of these targeted companies responded in 2002, a huge improvement over 1997.
- We sent letters from the Chief Counsel to over 40,000 nonresponding moderately large single-location companies. Response by businesses receiving this letter was about five percent higher than by similar companies that did not receive the letter. These letters were not personalized, as were the earlier letters to larger companies. Instead, we sent these Chief Counsel letters to the address we used for regular mailout and follow-up operations.
- During collection of the 2004 and 2005 Annual Survey of Manufactures and Report of Organization surveys, we experimented with variations of the Chief Counsel mail package. We determined that a slight change to the "mandatory" message on the outgoing envelope improved single-unit response. We also found that companies responded better to a Chief Counsel letter when it did not include a replacement form...apparently the thinner envelopes were handled more efficiently in the mailroom! For 2007, we will make high-level contacts with these historically noncompliant companies earlier in the census process. We will emphasize the reporting requirements, importance of census results, and suggest realistic ways to ease their reporting burden. The key is to start sooner.

3. Publicity, Advertising, and Outreach

We will conduct a public information campaign to set the stage for the 2007 Economic Census. We will work with trade associations, other non-governmental organizations, and Government agencies raise awareness of the Economic Census and encourage business people to watch for the forms. The objective is to reinforce messages in the questionnaire package, advance mailing, and other communications.

3.1 Message development

We have had three core messages in communicating information about the Economic Census: census data are important and useful, forms are due February 12, 2008, and response is required by law. For 2007, we are working with a public relations firm to develop, produce, and distribute messages and materials to communicate these messages to respondents through intermediaries.

As part of this effort, we conducted several focus groups with likely business respondents, and also with the trade associations they look to for news and information. We also conducted an online survey with the focus group participants (over two thirds) who agreed to accept follow-up contacts. The goal of the research was to assess awareness of the Economic Census and to evaluate communication strategies. The focus groups were conducted in late 2006 and early 2007, in Philadelphia, St Louis, Atlanta, Tampa, and Washington, DC. The groups yielded several useful findings:

1. The Internet has emerged as the important information source for most business people. (This is in stark contrast to ten years ago, when in-company accountants told us they were not permitted to use online resources.) Conversely, traditional business news sources, such as Wall Street Journal, were mentioned less frequently.
2. While the Internet has made people more efficient in completing their core duties, some business people complained that this same efficiency provides an opportunity for them to take on new core duties. Association executives note that that their members are overloaded with information and quickly shut out nonessential information.
3. Businesses increasingly look to their associations as an information source. Among other things, this provides the filter business people need to eliminate extraneous information. Newsletters and emails are important resources for associations and their members ... but blogs are not.
4. Payroll, shipping, logistics, and other outsourced services have emerged as important safety valves for business people to balance their many requirements. This is a change from the finding, reported in the Economic Census Advertising

5. and Response Behavior Study (1989) that just 6 percent of small businesses use outside accounting services. Providers of outsourced services present another opportunity to communicate the census message.
6. The reporting requirement is a strong motivator for business people. Even those who doubt that we enforce it would be likely to report if they know response is mandatory.
7. Confidentiality does not resonate with business people to the same degree as the mandatory reporting requirement. In general, most had no problem with the idea of sharing information about their business with the Census Bureau.
8. Few business people recall the last Economic Census, know why it is conducted, or know why they should complete it. Business people said that they have no idea what happens to the results of their reporting.
9. Business people want our messages to provide straightforward, relevant information, rather than wild claims trying to seduce them. ("Treat us like adults, tell us the truth....")
10. In considering a tagline for the census, panelists were interested in personal benefit. For example, one slogan – "*When Business Knows, Business Knows*," resonated with most business and association executives. On the other hand, "*America Needs Your Numbers*," a favorite five years ago in the aftermath of "9-11," was less well received.
11. Business people want to know how the data will be used. They were most favorably disposed to the Economic Census if they felt it might be useful to their business (See Table 2). Benefit to the government (e.g., "*America Needs*" was less compelling. When presented with images that suggested the value of census results (Appendix I, Industry Snapshot), business people said they would click through to learn more about it, and thus might be more favorably disposed to the task when considering a new census form.

Table 2. Sample Questions the Economic Census can Answer

1. What are average salaries in my industry?
2. What are the average revenues for businesses in my industry?
3. What is the average number of employees for businesses in my industry?
4. What are average sales per employee in my industry?
5. What can I find out about the industries I sell to?
6. How many competitors are in my local area?
7. How big is my industry in my local area?

3.2 Spreading the Message: Awareness and Validation

The focus groups made it clear that businesses are unaware of the Economic Census. This should not come as a surprise since we conduct the Economic Census only in one year out of five. Even within companies that receive a form, most employees are unaffected by the census (or any other government forms). To address this, we will implement an awareness campaign in the media and resources they look to for business information.

business.census.gov. One goal of the awareness campaign will be to attract people to a new entry point on the Census Bureau web site that highlights the value of the Economic Census. Focus group testing showed that this url was more memorable and conveyed the intended audience and official stature of the web site better than other alternatives (businessknows.gov, economic.census.gov, and census.gov/business). The entry point also will provide easy navigation to the information business people find most interesting and useful. The site also will provide a gateway to the Business Help Site, with sample forms, electronic reporting, and an array of online services, and to published census data via American FactFinder. Banner ads (Appendix 1) will link association and other websites to the Economic Census page.

Editorial content for business communication. We will provide editorial content for associations – emails, newsletters, and other media. Association executives told us they wanted brief, ready-to-use paragraphs that they can lay into their documents. Hardcopy versions of these materials would not be as helpful. These materials will be available on business.census.gov. Where necessary, we will tailor the materials for individual associations.

Public Service Advertising. Experience from earlier censuses demonstrates that it is difficult to get publications to run Economic Census PSAs. Nevertheless, PSAs help illustrate the campaign graphically. A cartoon-balloon theme for 2007 (See Appendix 2) grabbed attention better than two other alternatives tested in focus groups among businesses. We will provide a variety of images in electronic formats for use in electronic and print publications. During the awareness phase, which will commence in April 2007, the ads will speak to the value of the data. During the collection phase, designed to run starting in December 2007, the ads will provide visual recognition of the mailing envelope and encourage business people to watch for forms. All of the ads will seek to drive people to business.census.gov. We do not contemplate a third phase after the due date because intermediaries have been less willing to carry the negative message that forms are overdue and their members may be in violation of Federal law.

Information Kits. At the core of the 2002 Economic Census promotion effort was a series of colorful, informative media kits direct-mailed to intermediaries and news media. Timing for the mailings coincided with census collection and follow-up activity.

Information kits will play a less important role in the 2007 effort. Rather than mail complete kits, we will send introductory letters, fact sheets about the Economic Census, and examples of the data (e.g., analytic ratios and an industry snapshot), with an invitation to use online promotional electronic resources. We will have kits when we need them, for example when making a sales call to a potential partner.

3.3 Partnerships

We are developing lists of intermediaries, news media, and providers of outsourced services, integrating purchased lists with those obtained from Census Bureau internal resources including the Public Information Office, Customer Liaison Office, Congressional Affairs Office, Small Business Ombudsman, and subject divisions.

Top associations. The Economic Directorate has strong ties with many trade and professional associations. These organizations review our census forms during our forms design phase, and help deliver census results to their members. Businesses may look to their association with questions about the Economic Census. We will ask associations to help explain the importance of the census to their members, and link from their web sites to **business.census.gov**.

We will focus extra effort toward the most important organizations. First, we will focus on intermediaries with extensive nationwide representation of in-scope businesses. We already have struck a partnership with the American Payroll Association (APA). The APA is particularly important as a partner because most Economic Census respondents are Human Resource professionals, and look to APA for guidance on many topics relating to Federal reporting. We wrote an article for an upcoming issue of the APA Journal, a senior APA official will address AMs at a kick-off event in May, and Census Bureau staff will make presentations at several APA conferences. Similar partnerships are planned for other high-priority organizations.

Business response is not evenly distributed across industries, and we will focus on associations that represent industries with relatively low historic response rates. For example, outstanding forms in just 20 industries accounted for nearly 3 percent of total census mailout in the 2002 Economic Census (Table 2). We already have struck a partnership with the Professional LandCare Network, and other partnerships are in the works.

Table 3. Top 20 Industries (NAICS 6) by Outstanding SU Forms (2002 Economic Census)

NAICS6	Industry	Forms mailed	Forms returned	Percent response	Outstanding forms	Outstanding forms (as % of 5M forms mailed)
722110	Full-Service Restaurants	68,380	49,587	72.52	18,793	0.38
561730	Landscaping Services	67,395	57,089	84.71	10,306	0.21
722211	Limited-Service Restaurants	41,337	31,239	75.57	10,098	0.20
621111	Offices of Physicians	70,310	60,540	86.10	9,770	0.20
541110	Offices of Lawyers	75,877	67,558	89.04	8,319	0.17
721110	Hotels (except Casino Hotels) and Motels	31,874	24,340	76.36	7,534	0.15
621210	Offices of Dentists	53,819	46,890	87.13	6,929	0.14
624410	Child Day Care Services	28,626	21,983	76.79	6,643	0.13
238210	Electrical Contractors	48,986	42,430	86.62	6,556	0.13
811111	General Automotive Repair	35,196	28,647	81.39	6,549	0.13
445110	Supermarkets and Other Grocery Stores	19,388	12,916	66.62	6,472	0.13
722410	Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages)	22,635	16,429	72.58	6,206	0.12
447110	Gasoline Stations with Convenience Stores	23,384	18,039	77.14	5,345	0.11
445120	Convenience Stores	12,545	7,234	57.66	5,311	0.11
238220	Plumbing, Heating, Air-Conditioning Contractors	65,235	59,975	91.94	5,260	0.11
812112	Beauty Salons	22,894	17,716	77.38	5,178	0.10
531210	Offices of Real Estate Agents and Brokers	31,120	26,168	84.09	4,952	0.10
531110	Lessors of Residential Buildings and Dwellings	22,945	18,255	79.56	4,690	0.09
722213	Snack and Nonalcoholic Beverage Bars	17,866	13,331	74.62	4,535	0.09
561720	Janitorial Services	22,107	17,661	79.89	4,446	0.09

News Media. The Public Information Office has strong relationships with national and regional news media, and has an extensive array of tools to communicate information about Census Bureau programs. We will employ traditional tools such as news releases, news conferences, editorial boards, and op-ed columns, and non-traditional tools such as webinars and streaming video, to work with news media

Governments. State and local government organizations were essential to promoting Census 2000 response and helping to disseminate and explain census results. We will piggy-back on productive Census 2000/2010 partnerships and networks, with a particular focus on states with large numbers of businesses or historically lower response. We also will work through associations such as the National Governors' Association and the National Association of Counties.

To eliminate barriers preventing governmental and non-governmental organizations from using promotional materials effectively, we will provide implementation guides. The guides will include suggested timing and ways to use the materials. We will take

advantage of associations' regional networks, and new communication formats such as email newsletters, to communicate directly with businesses and leaders at the grassroots level.

4. Conclusion

In the information age, timely and accurate information is the currency of the successful entrepreneur and effective public policy. Policy makers, investors, and entrepreneurs will depend on the information developed in this census for the next several years. They expect the information they rely on to be complete, accurate, and timely

Economic Census dissemination plans reflect this: we will work to publish earlier, provide more core statistics reports that integrate data across sectors, increase the usefulness of industry data by issuing industry series for all sectors. We will continue to provide easy access to the data through American FactFinder and other means.

Economic Census communication plans are important to providing timely, high-quality data for Government and business decision makers. Better tools, frequent reminders, and increased focus on the reporting requirement will help motivate businesses to report earlier and better. Account Managers and online resources will help reduce the burden of census reporting. Publicity and advertising will demonstrate the value of the data and improve recognition of the census forms when they arrive.

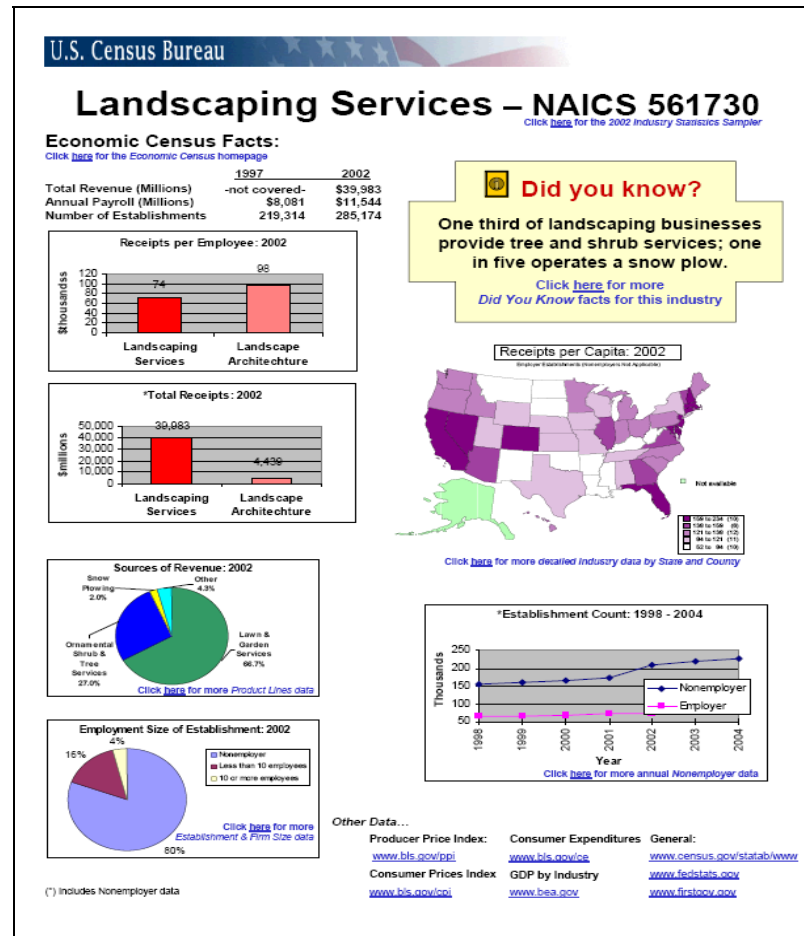
The awareness campaign reflects a long-term commitment to proving the value of the data we collect. The payoff will come as we find more and better ways to demonstrate to businesses that good data are worth the investment of their time, effort, and resources. Dividends from their investment will be realized in this Economic Census, and the next.

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Appendix 1. Industry Snapshots

Business and association focus group participants reacted favorably to Industry snapshots that illustrated the variety of information available from the Economic Census (and the current programs to which it relates). The snapshot communicated quickly that the census contains the kind of information they or their peers use in business planning.



Appendix 2. Advertising Concepts

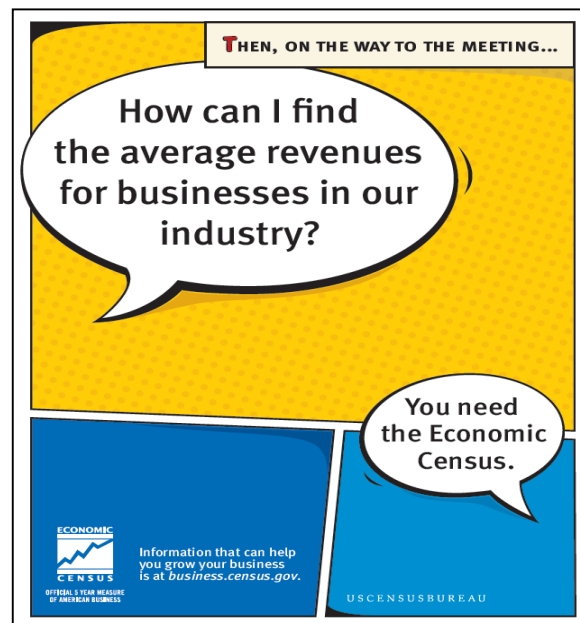
While business and association focus group members were divided on the clear “winner” from among several alternatives presented, they preferred images that tell what the Economic Census has to offer. For many, this came when they saw first the cartoon-balloon banner that posed the question, “How can I find the average salaries for jobs in my industries.” They said this is a question they ask all the time, and they definitely would follow the link.

Associations will use banner ads like this to link their website to the Economic Census.



Focus group members were amused by trivia, such as *the industry receipts of carwashes*, and said they would be more likely to notice trivia about another industry than their own. But in the end, they preferred no-nonsense, useful information that they might use in their jobs.

The Phase I ad asks (in several different variations; see Table 2) where you can get the information you need for your business. The answer is "You need the Economic Census."



The Phase 2 ads create recognition of the Economic Census mailing piece that the business should watch for. Association executives are reluctant to communicate a negative message relating to the filing requirement, but agreed that the message emblazoned on the envelope is a clever, almost subtle way to accomplish this.



business.census.gov -- a gateway to the 2007 Economic Census.

During the awareness phase, before mailout, this site will provide the census information business want, to demonstrate the value of the Economic Census. When forms are mailed out, the page will link to the Business Help Site, and later to census results.

Focus group members were amused by trivia, such as *the industry receipts of carwashes*. But in the end, they preferred no-nonsense, useful information that they might use in their jobs. Focus group members also said "I want the figures to be available when I visit the page."

U.S. Census Bureau

ECONOMIC CENSUS
OFFICIAL 5 YEAR MEASURE OF AMERICAN BUSINESS

Help promote the 2007 Economic Census

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS TESTIMONIALS MEDIA / ASSOCIATIONS CONTACT US

How do I find the average salaries for jobs in my industry? Select your industry below.

IT'S A FACT... 85% OF THE COUNTRY'S GAS STATIONS SELL GROCERIES AND OTHER FOOD ITEMS.

The Economic Census helps organizations make informed business decisions. Take a moment now to see just a sample of the information available to you.

Industry Snapshots Select a featured industry

Analytic Ratios for Business Select any industry

"The Economic Census is indispensable to understanding America's economy."
- Ben Bernanke, Chairman, Federal Reserve Board

Want more information about your local area?

How do businesses use this information?

Coming to businesses in December: 2007 Economic Census forms

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